

COACH SAVED!

FIRST the good news: the historic Coach & Horses has been reprieved after a year-long battle to save it from the bulldozers.

Public pressure, spearheaded by CAMRA's campaign, has forced the Transport Executive, to back down on their plans to demolish the 150-year old pub on London Road to make way for the city's new Light Transit scheme.

Councillor Jack Flannagan, who is chairman of the Transport Executive's Metrolink Working Party has expressed delight at the outcome saying that it illustrates how those involved with the Metrolink development are "totally responsive to the outcome of consultations." The future of the pub site is now being discussed with the Central Manchester Development Corporation and CAMRA will be lobbying for the restoration of the building and its surrounding area.

Some readers may have seen a piece in "The Sun" on the Coach & Horses which suggested that, by campaigning to keep the pub open, CAMRA was condemning licensees Bill and Jean O'Reilly to live and work in squalor. Let's be clear - the present state of repair of the pub, in particular the private quarters, is utterly unsatisfactory, and no-one in CAMRA would say a word against Bill and Jean if they closed the doors tomorrow. What we want is to see the pub retained, repaired and improved so that Bill and Jean, and eventually their successors, can have decent conditions in which to run what is, even now, a far better pub than anyone has a right to expect in such a building.

Worse news however comes from the Castle & Falcon, where a serious fire occurred in late January, in circumstances which are not entirely clear - sources on the construction site suggest that the pub was broken into to gain access to the jewellers next door, with the fire being started to cover the intruders' tracks; the jeweller, however, has denied all knowledge of a break in...

After some weeks, the building has now been weather-proofed and has been declared structurally sound by the Dangerous Buildings Inspector. Even so, the building's future must now be in some doubt.



The countdown to Stockport's 4th Beer Festival, this year sponsored by **KFM Radio**, continues. The beer has now been ordered and as well as old festival favourites like Taylor's Landlord and Bateman's XXXB, there will be beers to suit all tastes including 10 milds (Moorhouses, King & Barnes, Adnams...), 7 stouts and porters (Taylors, Caledonian, Ringwood...) and over 30 bitters and premium bitters including 2 Festival specials, one from Brendan Dobbin's West Coast Brewery and one from Clark's of Wakefield...more next month...

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1	8 15 22 29...	
2	9 16 23 30...	
3	10 17 24.....	
4	11 18 25.....	
5	12 19 26.....	
6	13 20 27.....	
7	14 21 28.....	

THE Pub of the Month Award for April 1990 has gone to a South Manchester pub - the **Victoria**, on Wilmslow Road in Withington.

A Hydes house, the Victoria is in the capable hands of Keith and Nora, who have been there for three years, having previously been at the Junction in Hulme, another Hydes pub. Under their care, the Victoria has maintained its role as one of the few genuine community locals in an area of the city which is more and more given over to yuppie oriented 'style bars'. A wide range of customers is attracted not only by the comfortable, unpretentious surroundings but also the excellently kept Hydes Mild and Bitter which have seen the pub earn a place in the 1990 Good Beer Guide.

A warm welcome will certainly be assured on Thursday, April 26th when the award is presented to Nora and Keith and an excellent night is in prospect.

HYDE AND SEEK

LOCAL brewers, Hydes, have been quick off the mark onto the guest beer bandwagon which could soon be rolling through the tenanted estate of the big brewers.

tie up with Warrington-based Tetley Walker, whereby Hydes take Carlton LA Lager in a few of their pubs sees in return Hydes bitter in two of Tetley's managed houses - the Bold Arms in Southport and, closer to home, The Manor House in Withington where it makes a welcome addition to the range.

Is it likely to go into more Tetley houses? Hydes aren't saying at the moment...

HIND SALES AGAIN

THE Golden Hind on Marple Road, Offerton re-opened last month after an extensive refurbishment.

The layout now comprises of a spacious lounge separate snug, and a vault/games room at the rear. Lounge and snug are comfortably furnished with lots of exposed woodwork, pictures on the walls and even vases of dried flowers. The long bar itself now has a rich natural wood finish. A nice touch in the centre of the pub are two 'high tables' for standing customers. The snug is separated from the lounge by wood and glass partitions and, whilst this room has a quieter atmosphere one drawback is the loud (too loud) taped musak throughout the pub.

The beer range now consists of Websters Choice Yorkshire Bitter (96p), Wilsons Bitter (92p) and Ruddles Best Bitter (98p). The mild is keg. A wide range of beers, but surely 4 bitter are at least one too many.

Overall, the pub is a vast improvement on the plastic American bar that Drakes used to be. Let's hope that Grand Met have now got these pubs out of their system once and for all (fat chance! - ed.) A few more pubs like the Golden Hind and everyone should be happy. Any chance of the Round House on Belmont Way getting the treatment?

GOING ONCE

As reported last month, one new feature of the forthcoming Stockport Beer Festival will be a series of Breweriana Auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday night plus Saturday Luncheon. There has already been considerable interest in this, so if you've any brewer memorabilia that you would like to sell (eg bottles, trays, advertising material etc) please contact our auction organiser, Bernard Holland on 487 2244 (evenings only).

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HARD LABOUR

AFTER a number of years during which keg Whitbread beers had driven away all but the most dedicated supporters, the bar at Stockport Labour Club has switched to real ale with remarkable success.

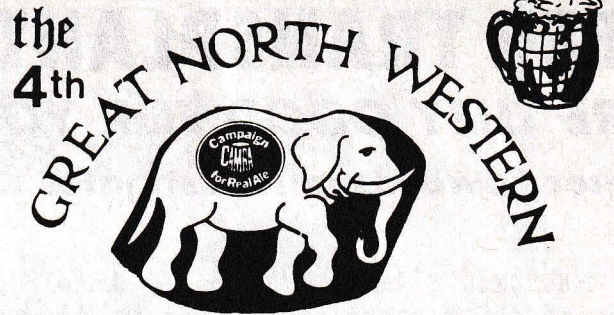
Whitbread's reps spent much time trying to persuade the club not to take the risk due to the 'low turnover'. They failed and, after trying a number of beers from the Whitbread stable, finally settled on Thwaites Bitter. This, too, was originally supplied by Whitbread, but as it can be obtained cheaper direct from Thwaites, the committee decided to sever the Whitbread tie - last seen the brewery rep was virtually on his knees begging them not to do so; let's hope his pleas fell on deaf ears.

Such is the success of the venture, that further beers are being considered and a mini beer festival is being planned for the Autumn (more news when we have it). Perhaps other clubs should note - listen to your current and potential members rather than brewery representatives with poor products to sell and fat cheque books to compensate.

BE THE first to get your festival T Shirt with this year's impressive logo prominently displayed. Last year the T-shirts had sold out by Friday evening, so this is your chance to make sure you get one before the rush.

At only £3.50 each with a choice of 3 colours (grey, white or blue) and 3 sizes (M, L, XL), there cannot be many better buys. For your T-shirt send a cheque, payable to Stockport Beer Festival, together with details of size and colour required, to Jim Flynn, 66 Downham Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport (p&p 75p if you live outside the Stockport and South Manchester area).

Does your business want a stall at Stockport Beer Festival? If so, please telephone Jim on 432 1816 for more details.



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For those of you eagerly awaiting the 4th Stockport Beer Festival, we have news of another local festival on which to wet your whistles - the Great North Western Beer festival is just 3 weeks before Stockport and will feature over 150 beers, with milds and low gravity bitters strongly featured. It's a popular event which can easily be reached on the train from Stockport & South Manchester. Coach parties should book in advance - phone Glenn Worth on 061 798 7639 (evenings only).

Anyone wanting to help out should contact the staffing officer, Pete Cash, on 061 794 5143.


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BEER TRANSPLANTS! ARE THEY GOOD FOR YOU?

Peter Edwardson Investigates

IF YOU didn't have a detailed knowledge of the recent history of brewing in Manchester, you could be forgiven for thinking that in OB, Chesters and Wilsons you were drinking authentic local beers. In fact, all these brews are now produced elsewhere - OB not in Oldham but by Whitbread at the former Boddingtons plant, Chesters by Whitbread again at Sheffield, and Wilsons by Grand Met at Halifax. They are just three local examples of the growing army of beers which continue to exist in a kind of life after death, after their home breweries have been closed - the latest recruit being of course Higsons, where Whitbread plan to shut the Liverpool brewery and transfer production to Sheffield.

Back in the bad old days of the 1960s none of this happened. Small breweries were simply gobbled up by the big boys, who proceeded to waste no time in shutting the plants and putting their own heavily promoted national brands into the pubs. Those drinkers who had preferred their obscure local brew to Watneys Red Barrel just had to like it or lump it. But in the 1970s, with the rise of CAMRA, the big brewers started to realise that there was a demand for distinctive local beers. For a time, they held off closing those local breweries they had left, but in the leaner times of the 80s they went back to shutting plants in the name of economy. Now though, to keep the locals quiet, they continued brewing a version of the beer somewhere else.

Bass were one of the first, when they closed Joules at Stone, and for a time brewed Joules Bitter at Burton. Who remembers that now? Allied

Breweries closed Ansells in Birmingham and moved their beers to Ind Coope at Burton; Grand Met shut the Norwich Brewery and transferred S & P Best Bitter to Wilsons at Manchester - until that closed too. Undoubtedly the worst offenders have been Whitbread, who on top of Chesters and Higsons have closed a whole string of breweries across the South of England, and now brew brands such as Wethereds, Strongs and Pompey Royal at Cheltenham, in one big plant.

In the late 80s the regional brewers jumped on the same bandwagon. Marstons now brew Border beers at Burton, Greenalls produce Davenports and Wem at Shipstones in Nottingham, and Brent Walker brew Tolly Cobbold from Ipswich at Camerons in Hartlepool. Confusing, isn't it? But, you may say, companies have to make economies to stay competitive, and surely Sheffield brewed Higsons is better than no Higsons at all?

If you want to, you can cut costs without shutting breweries, but the big brewers in reality see no long-term future for these transplanted beers. It isn't OB or Wilsons that get the big advertising budgets, it's Boddingtons and Websters. They just keep brewing them for a while to soften the blow of closing the brewery, then they stealthily withdraw them from more and more pubs and eventually axe them due to "lack of demand" - manufactured by the brewer. Is a lingering death any better than a quick one?

Also, none of these beers really taste like the ones they are supposed to replace, and while some are palatable enough, most are much inferior. Each brewing plant has its own "house character" which gives a distinctive flavour to all the beers it produces. Higsons brewed in Sheffield will inevitably take on a "Sheffield" character, and it will become a Sheffield beer trying to taste like a Liverpool one, and ending up somewhere bland in between. Much the same has happened to Wilsons - nowadays many drinkers say it tastes much like Websters.

The conclusion must be that "beer transplants" have nothing to commend them. The choice they offer is a half-hearted and spurious one, and basically they are just another confidence trick perpetrated on consumers by the big brewers. It would be unthinkable for the company who make Glenfiddich malt whisky to shut their distillery in the Highlands, move the stills to Glasgow and still claim that what they were producing was still Glenfiddich. The product would lose all integrity and credibility. CAMRA is working towards the day when brewery closures will be seen - as they deserve to be - in just the same way.

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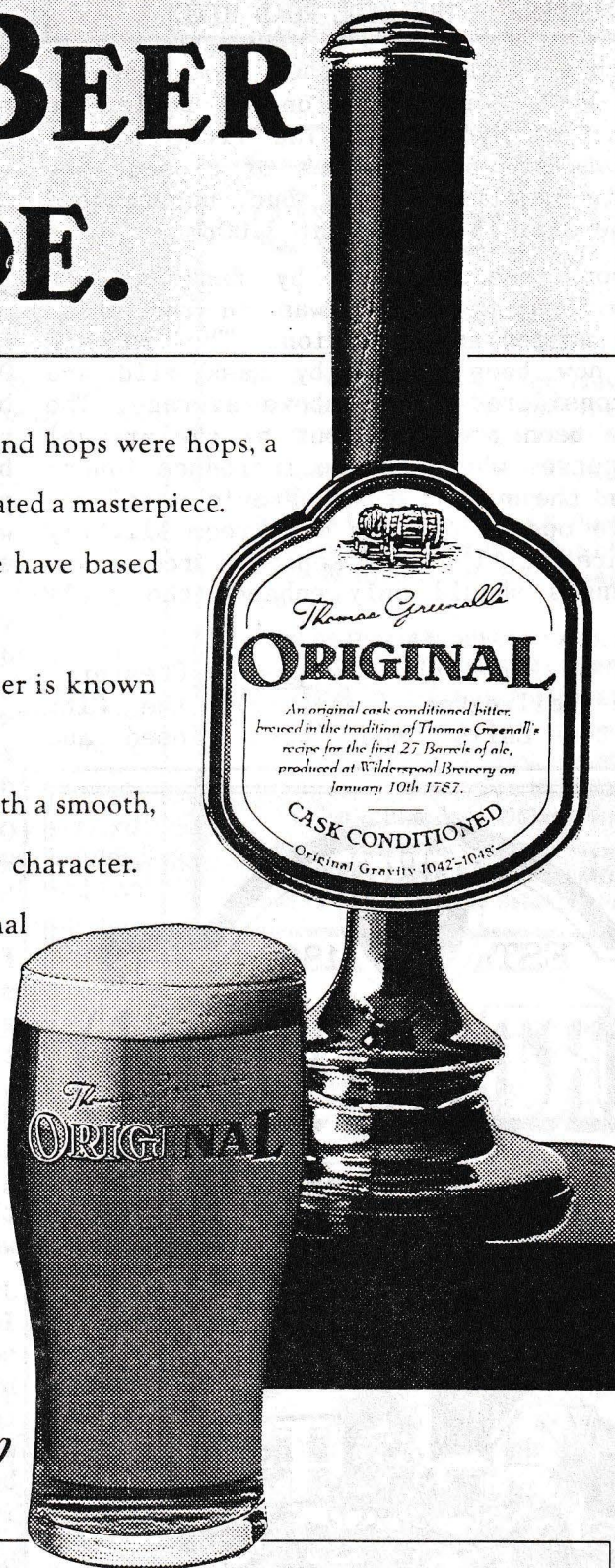
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(All above outlets in Stockport).

TOMMY DUCKS, 8/12 East Street. PACK HORSE, 359/361 Deansgate. PACK HORSE, 1135 Ashton Old Road, Openshaw.
WELCOME INN, 2 Hyth Road, Didsbury. CROWN, 770 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury.
DOG & PARTRIDGE, 665/7 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury. QUEENS ARMS, 72 Guide Lane, Denton.
CARTERS ARMS, 209 Stockport Road, Denton.
(All above outlets in Manchester).

STAGGER

BY: IAN SAUNDERS - THE HYDE ROAD HIKE

THIS month's Stagger stretched from Ardwick, through West Gorton and on to Belle Vue down part of Hyde Road. The first leg of the crawl consists of a series of closed, keg or soon to be demolished pubs, but, unperturbed we met in the **Star** in Ardwick at 7.00pm.

former Wilsons pub acquired by Banks's just over a year ago, the Star was in the midst of a much needed redecoration. The Banks's Bitter has now been joined by cask mild and both were considered to be above average. The changes have been brought about by the arrival of a new licensee who hopes to introduce lunch-time food in the near future. Previous refurbishments have opened out the main room slightly but there are still three separate rooms and the new changes should only enhance the pub's character.

A long walk up Hyde Road now past 4 Chesters' pubs - the **Wellington** (keg-only), the **City Gates** and the **Bulls Head** (both closed and

boarded up) and the **Junction** (keg). A sad state of affairs this, as the original Chesters Brewery was in Ardwick and it is yet another kick in the teeth from Whitbread to the local drinker. Brighter news ahead as we went into West Gorton to the **Dolphin**, a former Marstons pub which had been closed for some time but reopened last year as a Tetley 'free house'. A typical big brewers plush refurbishment now opened out into a single room but with some nice framed photographs of the old pub. Three cask beers were on offer when the pub reopened but now, sadly, the mild has gone to keg and, as the **Burton Ale** was off on our visit, this left just Tetley Bitter which was above average. A keg bitter pump was spotted round the corner of the bar but this was thoughtfully not in use.

On now to the **Horseshoe**, a traditional 3-roomed boozier complete with outside toilets and untouched for many years. The pub was very quiet but the subdued lighting gave it a cosy atmosphere. The **Robinsons Best Mild** and **Best Bitter** were both highly rated. Next is the **Unicorn**, another traditional multi-roomed local, again untouched for ages and featuring some nice internal tiling, but now looking a bit run down. This neglect has been brought about by the fact that this pub and the **Horseshoe** are soon to be demolished to make way for a new road. There was consolation in a good pint of handpumped **Boddingtons Bitter**.

Onwards now to the **Travellers Call**, a small Hydes pub which can easily be missed in a small block that also includes a transport cafe. Yet another unspoilt pub but once again its future is uncertain. It should however remain standing for longer than the previous two and as such was receiving a well deserved lick of paint. It was clear that this redecoration would not spoil the traditional aspects of the pub - the central bar, front vault and the smoke room at the rear with its stained glas sliding door. A good atmosphere here and the electrically dispensed **Mild** and **Bitter** were both well thought of.

Just off the main road on Birch Street is the **Imperial**, an almost two-roomed pub with false beams and a generally run down feel. A free house but now with only one real ale, **Boddingtons Bitter** (the Banks's Mild is keg) which was above average. We arrived as barrels were being changed so some beer was taken back but it was quickly changed - always nice to see.

Back on to Hyde Road for more Boddingtons at the **Nags Head**, a multi-roomed boozier with central bar. The decor isn't too bad but is starting to deteriorate. Still no real mild and the bitter not managing to score as high as either of the previous Boddies coming in at "just above average".

On the road again, past the site of the **Rock**, now demolished, and to a Whitbread house with

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real beer at last! The **Victoria** is a one room pub that has some over the top carpets and wallpaper but is otherwise quite plush for the area with lots of ornaments scattered about. The handpumped Chesters Mild was just above average, the Bitter just under. Boddingtons Bitter was due to arrive the following week.

Next was the **Coach & Horses**, a pleasant pub with separate vault and lounge, and featuring a leaded glass and tiled bar. The place is always full of locals but particularly this evening as the pub singer was entertaining in the lounge. We found it more entertaining drinking the Robinsons beers - the Best Bitter was above average and the Best Mild and Old Tom were both good.

The next stop was due to be at the **Cheshire Hunt**, a 'free house' selling John Smiths Bitter. However, although the handpumps were still there, complete with pumpclips, all beer was being dispensed by a keg pump. A stream of people all pointing to the handpumps and walking out when offered keg made the point we think, particularly as we would have been the only customers. On a more serious note, this deception has been reported to the Trading Standards Office.

Next was the **Pineapple**, set back from Hyde Road. It is a pub with a single room but with areas clearly defined for vault and lounge. We drank in the lounge area, which was comfortable enough, with photographs of the area adorning the walls. The beers were Hydes Mild and Bitter on electric pumps; both were above average with the bitter being marginally preferred.

Thus ended an evening around an interesting part of Manchester with good variety and a good mix of pubs. As ever the comments simply reflect what we found on the night and should not be taken as a once and for all judgement on the pubs or beers, try them for yourselves and see what you think.



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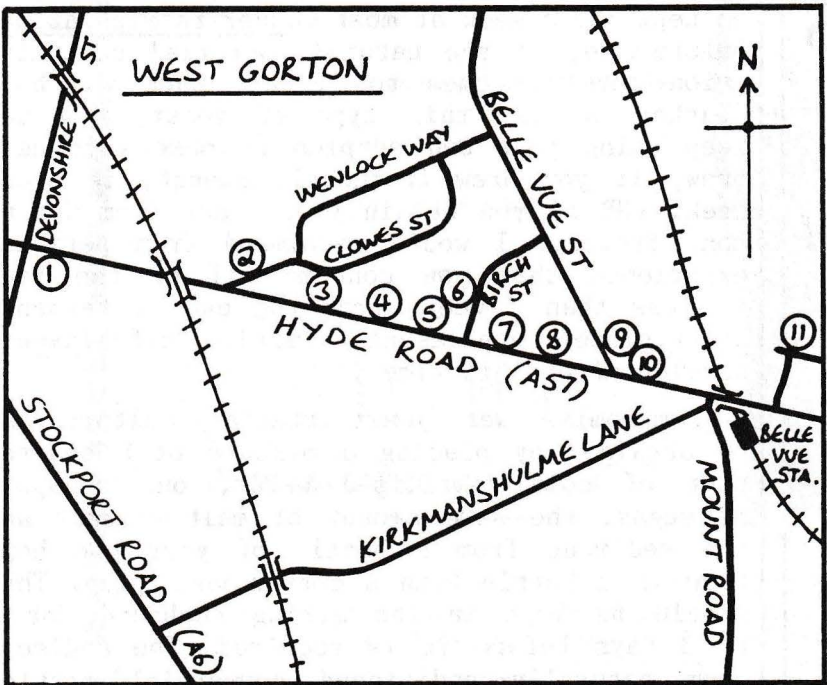
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HOME BREW

BY ALASTAIR WALKER

THIS MONTH: YEAST

WITH the possible exception of water, yeast is the most indispensable component in beer, since it is the sole agent that has the ability to convert a sweet malty beverage with the same kick as Horlicks, into the strong, beautifully balanced liquid poetry that is Taylors Landlord.

Before describing some of the types of yeast available to the home brewer, let's dispense with some misconceptions. Yeast is a living organism. It is a fungus that goes by the name of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. A different type of yeast, variety *carlsbergensis*, is used to brew lager. All yeast ferments inside the bulk of the beer, not on top nor on the bottom. With lager-type yeast, the dead and surplus cells settle out at the bottom of the beer and is known as 'bottom-fermenting', whereas beer yeast rises to the surface and is subsequently called 'top-fermenting'. Baker's yeast cannot be used to make beer because it is very unstable and will not readily settle out to

leave the beer clear. Wine yeast should not be used either, since it requires different conditions for optimum efficiency.

Yeast exerts its beneficial effect by converting the sugars from the malt into alcohol. A good quality yeast will convert at least 75% of the sugar, before the concentration of alcohol becomes too great for the yeast to tolerate. For barley wines and other very strong beers, special alcohol resistant strains such as Formula 67 and champagne yeast can be used to enable a finished beer with a very high percentage of alcohol to be produced.

The most commonly available type of yeast for home brewers is freeze dried granules. The big advantage of this type of yeast is that it can be stored for many months before being used. However, the freeze-drying process kills many of the yeast cells and alters the characteristics of the remainder, such that harsh off-flavours in the finished beer are common. A level teaspoonful of granules per 5-gallon brew is the correct amount. Granules can normally be purchased in individual, one-brew sachets, or more cost effectively in multi-brew tubs.

Certain home-brew suppliers will stock sachets of wet yeast slurry. This form of yeast will produce a much smoother beer, with fewer off-flavours, but tends to be very expensive (up to three times the cost of granules).

By far the best kind of yeast to use is fresh, wet brewers yeast from a commercial brewery. A small cupful is required, and can often be obtained free if you have a friendly commercial brewer nearby. Otherwise, certain specialised home-brew shops may stock it in small bagfuls. The snag is that this type of yeast can only be kept for a week at most (under refrigeration) before use, or the natural bacterial contamination level becomes too great. Once you have started to use this type of yeast, you can keep using your own surplus to make your next brew, if you brew frequently enough, ie every week. (NB if you obtain your yeast from Robinsons Brewery, I would recommend from personal experience that you consume all of the beer in less than 3 weeks from the end of fermentation, since unpleasant, acid, off-flavours develop after this time.)

A compromise wet yeast starter culture can be obtained by placing a mixture of a quarter pint of cold sterilised water, one teaspoon of sugar, the same amount of malt extract and the sediment from a bottle of your own home brew in a bottle with a cotton wool plug. This should be kept in the airing cupboard for 2 to 3 days before it is required. The sediment from naturally-conditioned commercial bottled beers such as Guinness (but not from supermarkets) or Worthington White Shield can also be used although these can take longer to get a good starter culture.

Next month: Fermentation and Conditioning

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LETTERS

From: Peter Soane

The decline of the House of Boddingtons continues with a ghastly Castlemaine XXXX banner draped across the front of the George in Mersey Square. Is this what the MMC report meant by guest beers?

From: Kim Rampley

Regarding 'Local Drinker's' experience with over-loud music (Letters last month). My experience has been sadly that staff and licensees are not very interested in complaints. I once complained in a (Good Beer Guide listed!) pub about short measure, it was topped up very begrudgingly and I was told I would not be served again. Surely a misuse of the licensee's rights?

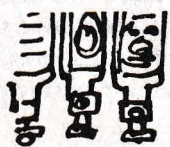
Writing to breweries seems to provoke a standard response: "it is up to the licensee as to whom he/she serves/runs their pub". (Oddly this seems to apply whether the pub is tenanted or managed.)

Certainly brewers here can learn a lot from - say - Sainsburys, McDonalds, Tesco, Marks & Spencer etc. I can say from experience that they all wish to know of ANY consumer complaint, and will put it right FAIRLY and even GENEROUSLY.

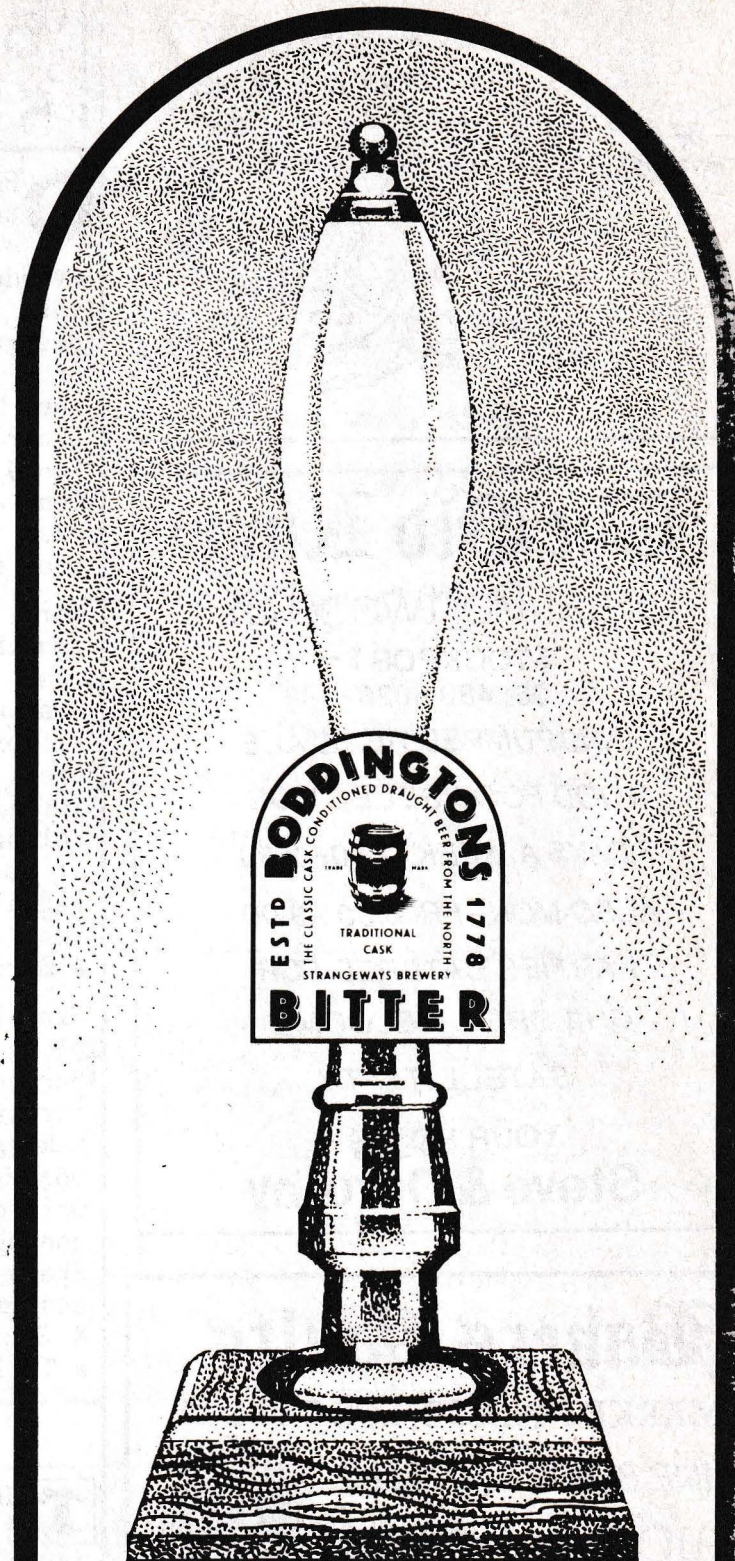
Certainly I would advise spending the cost of a stamp writing to the brewery - asking perhaps for a gesture of goodwill, free pint etc, but I advise being polite and marking the letter "copy to: CAMRA, Manchester Evening News...etc" (no-one surely likes bad publicity.)

The consumer is ALWAYS right. Any trader who does not believe this - be they small back street local or large conglomerate running megakeggeries - is in SEVERE need of psychiatric help.

More power to your elbows!

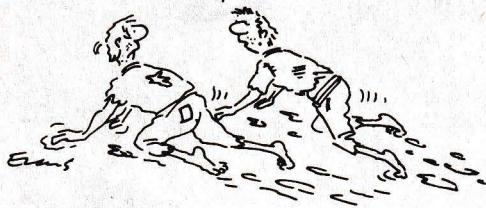


CAN YOU THINK OF A
TOPIC OF CONVERSATION -
I'M AFRAID WE'VE
COMPLETELY RUN OUT



THE CLASSIC
CASK
CONDITIONED
BITTER

I'm not stopping if
they've only got one
of those awful fake
Scandinavian lagers...



5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
YEARS AGO 5 5 5 5 5 5 5

OPENING Times of April 1985 reported that the **Crown** on Didsbury had re-opened. This was originally a small Greenalls pub that must have been long overdue for a re-fit - it was made larger by extending into the old jeweller's shop next door, and local Design Consultants persuaded Greenalls not to make ot a complete rip-out job. The finished result had the bar in roughly the same position, retained the floor of the original vault (which became the Games Room) and several completely different drinking areas. General consensus of opinion at the time was that much of the general atmosphere of the old pub had been retained.

More news of Banks's - they had just re-opened their fourth ex-Wilsons's pub since they first started their push into the Greater Manchester area. This was the **Gransmoor** on Ashton Old Road, but there was something different about it, as it had a 'sound and light' area. Miscellaneous items suspended just below ceiling level (bread bin, cooking pot, tin bath) flashed coloured lights synchronised with the music system. It was the closest that Banks's had come to fun pub, but although it seemed very popular at first, it wasn't very long before a refurbishment turned it back into a more traditional pub.

Finally, a few of the alterations that were taking place in April 1985:-

Burtonwood's **Union** on Princess Street - closed being structurally strengthened, and a major refurbishment taking place.

Shady Lady, Oxford Street - re-opened as Open House/Oxfords - one of Pennine Hosts refurbishments. and out of town -

Shady Oak in Bramhall - almost ready to open - an addition to the very few free houses in the Stockport & South Manchester area (but now, 5 years later, it's a Tetley pub).

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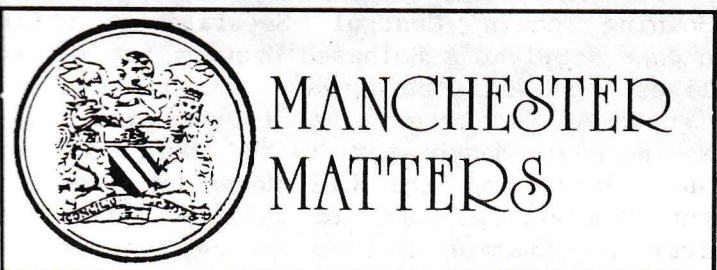
A PUB DIES

THEY needed the Horseshoe for a slip road. Just a main road boozier, with a little vault at the front and the rest of the pub to your left.

Nobody fought, but everybody cared. The last night found one-visit wonders alongside 20-year regulars; the beer was 60p (and it was great stuff too); cameras clicked while the pool players cursed each other; and the clock ticked on...and on...

Let's just record, then, that the Horseshoe on Hyde Road, West Gorton, closed its doors on Tuesday 13th March. We thank John and Nora for a great night in a great pub, wish them well for the future, and mourn one of the last old-style inner-city locals.





MANCHESTER MATTERS

N BRADFORD, the **Shakespeare** on Forge Lane, for long a keg-only Whitbread house, is now a Whitbread-influenced freehouse selling what could well become their standard range of cask beers for the North West - Chesters Mild, Boddingtons Bitter and Marstons Pedigree, all on handpump. In Levenshulme, "**Sports**" is now once again known by its sensible name, the **Pack Horse**. Run by an outfit called Temple Inns (who they?), it has Ruddles Bitter and Websters Bitter on handpump - the Websters, though, is likely to be more than usually unimpressive, as the handpump is unmarked and stands next to the keg Websters Bitter on the bar. A curiosity was the retention of the 'Sports' motif carpet.

As described elsewhere, the **Horseshoe** in West Gorton closed in mid-March, and despite some confusion over the Compulsory Purchase Order, the nearby **Unicorn** is also likely to be closed by the time you read this.

Boddingtons Bitter continues to spread into the Whitbread tied estate, with recent sitings at the **Grey Mare** in Beswick and the **Crown & Anchor** in the City Centre. Staying in the Centre it was a nasty shock to discover recently, quite by chance, that mild at the **Peveril of the Peak** is now keg on handpump - not the sort of practice expected in such a splendid little pub. Better news, though, from Cross Street, where **Mr Thomas's Chop House** has been extended very pleasantly into an area of the pub that had lain unused for 50 years; there's a change of beer too, with handpumped Marstons Pedigree replacing Boddingtons "Oldham" Bitter.

Finally, a round-up of beer changes in East

Manchester. The **Little Bradford** has added hand-pumped Theakstons Bitter, the **Napoleon** in Openshaw has gained handpumped Ruddles Bitter; the **Dolphin** in West Gorton has got rid of its Tetley beers and Burton Ale in favour of Boddingtons Bitter and Marstons Pedigree on handpumps. In Levenshulme **Dicey Reillys** now seems to be down to just Boddies Bitter on handpump (and even that, reportedly, pretty "dicey" on a recent visit). It's sad to see the same old beers cropping up in the free trade (well, free-ish anyway); come May, Wouldn't it be nice to see national brewery tenants using their new-found freedom of choice to give us something really different, from breweries such as, say, Titanic, Robinwood, or our own Brendan Dobbin - here's hoping!

CAMRA CALLING

ONLY room for one or two announcements this month.

The branch AGM will be held on Thursday 12th, at the Blossoms, Buxton Road, Stockport. We will be starting at 8.0pm prompt, and all CAMRA members attending should bring their membership cards if they want to vote.

The Stagger this month is in the Burnage area starting at 7.00pm in the Milestone on Burnage Lane or join at 8.30 in the Sun in September, also Burnage Lane.

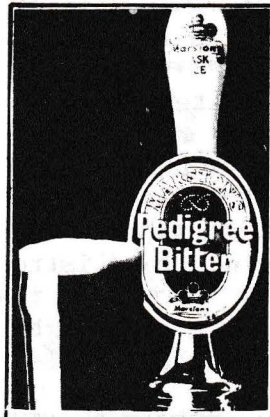
Pub of the Month is on 26th at the Victoria in Withington (see page 2) and the following night, Friday 27th, we are holding a **New Members Social**, for those who have joined the Campaign in the last 12 months. This will take the form of a mini-bus trip to the Tap & Spile freehouse in Rochdale and the subsidised price for new members is only £2 per head.. If you want more details phone either John Clarke (tel. no. on back page) or Stuart Ballantyne on 428 4114.

We will also be holding our regular Monday Socials, please phone for details of these if you want to come along.

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PUB NEWS



Hartleys XB has been taken off sale at the **Church**, Edgeley due to poor sales. Despite being stocked in small 9-gallon containers, the beer still wasn't selling fast enough to maintain quality.

Another **Church**, this time the keg Bass pub next to Longsight Library, is closed at present. Nothing has been heard of any possible plans for the place.

The relentless march of Boddingtons Bitter through the Whitbread estate has now extended to the **Chapel House** in Heaton Chapel where it is to be hoped that it

is maintained in better form than the Chesters Bitter which was particularly unpleasant on a recent visit.

Boddingtons will not be appearing at the **Hind's Head**, also in Heaton Chapel, landlord Alan Preston has decided that it is widely enough available in the locality. The Hind's Head continues to feature Whitbread guest beers and currently has Wethereds Bitter on sale.

The **Sun & Castle** on Stockport's Hillgate is currently closed for what the signs on the door ominously call 'alterations'. This Tetley pub has (had?) a superb, almost totally unspoilt 1930's interior with much light oak panelling and leaded glass. Let us hope that the brewery take the opportunity to enhance rather than ruin this. The pub was also a recent convert to cask beer - luckily the brewery themselves seem keen on promoting real ale and we can hopefully look forward to an enhanced range with, say, Burton Ale, joining the Tetleys and Jennings when the pub reopens.

In West Didsbury, Boddingtons Bitter has put in an appearance at the **Midland**, whilst over the road at the **Railway** there is still no sign of work starting on the knock-through into the chemist's shop next door. Further down Lapwing Lane at the **Nose** wine bar/bistro Dobbin's Guiltless Stout is now available in bottles. We understand that there could be more interesting developments on the bottled beer front here before long.

Pub-owning chain Control Securities, which also owns Scotland's Belhaven Brewery but mostly declines to sell Belhaven's excellent real ale south of the border, has bought three more pubs in East Manchester - the **Metropole** on Rylance Steet and the **Old House at Home** on Ashton Old Road, both in Beswick, and the **Railway** on Chapman Street in Gorton. While the Beswick pair are pretty run-down to start with (the Metropole, indeed, is currently closed following a number of violent incidents), the Railway has considerable potential, and it would be a shame to see it fall victim to Control's usual policy of neglect. This policy has also claimed its latest victim in the shape of the **Sherwood** in Ardwick which is currently closed again, although to be fair if there ever was a no-hoper, this pub was it.

On a more exotic note, **Tescos** in East Didsbury is selling something by the name of Thurn & Taxis Kristall Weissen Bier, which despite its daunting name is an excellent German special-ity wheat beer. It's 5.5%ABV and at 95p for a half litre is certainly worth trying.

Contributors to this edition: Rhys Jones, John Hutchinson, Peter Soane, Jim Flynn, John Clarke, Peter Edwardson, Ian Saunders, Alastair Walker, Phil Levison, Paul Thompson

Copy date for the next issue is Friday 20th with publication on Tuesday 1st May.

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Opening Times is published by Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA — the Campaign For Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the campaign either locally or nationally. Editor: John Clarke, 45 Bulkeley St, Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9WD. Tel: 477 1973 (home), 831 7222 ext. 3411 (work). News, articles and letters welcome. All items © CAMRA:: may be reproduced if source acknowledged.